

III. REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1, 8 and 16 have been amended and claims 2, 11 and 20 have been canceled. As a result, claims 1, 3-10, 12-19 and 21-23 remain pending in this application. Applicant is not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Office, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Office. Applicant does not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserves the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 8 and 16 are objected to for alleged informalities. Claims 1-7 and 16-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 1, 6-9, 14-17 and 22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Robinson (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,369), hereafter "Robinson," in view of Jannink *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,697,800), hereafter "Jannink." Claims 2-5, 10-13 and 18-21 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant gratefully appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter.

A. OBJECTION TO CLAIMS 1, 8 AND 16 FOR INFORMALITIES

The Office has objected to claims 1, 8 and 16 as allegedly containing informalities. Applicant has amended claims 1, 8 and 16 to recite "...based on a recency." Accordingly,

Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

B. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-7 AND 16-23 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §101

The Office has rejected claims 1-7 and 16-23 for allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Specifically, the Office asserts that the claimed invention does not produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. Applicant, in order to expedite prosecution, has amended claim 1 to include "...wherein the relationship strength is used to facilitate communications between the first user and the second user." Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment, *inter alia*, contains language necessary to satisfy the Office's conditions. In addition, Applicant has amended claim 16 to include "a computer readable medium." Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

C. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1, 6-9, 14-17 and 22-23 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection over Robertson in view of Jannink, the Office has objected to claims 2-5, 10-13 and 18-21 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicates that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has amended claims 1, 8 and 16 to include the subject matter of claims 2, 11 and 20, respectively. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are allowable as currently constituted.

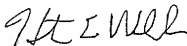
With respect to dependent claims, Applicant herein incorporates the arguments presented above with respect to the independent claims from which the claims depend. Furthermore, Applicant submits that all dependent claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. Since the cited art does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

IV. CONCLUSION

In addition to the above arguments, Applicant submits that each of the pending claims is patentable for one or more additional unique features. To this extent, Applicant does not acquiesce to the Office's interpretation of the claimed subject matter or the references used in rejecting the claimed subject matter. Additionally, Applicant does not acquiesce to the Office's combinations and modifications of the various references or the motives cited for such combinations and modifications. These features and the appropriateness of the Office's combinations and modifications have not been separately addressed herein for brevity. However, Applicant reserves the right to present such arguments in a later response should one be necessary.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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